



TOWN OF ACTON  
DESIGN REVIEW BOARD  
Review Memorandum: 296 & 298 Central Street  
Room 9, Town Hall  
July 13, 2016

DRB Members in attendance: Holly Ben-Joseph (Chair), Peter Darlow (Assistant Chair), David Honn, Kim Montella, Michael Dube and Janet Adachi (Board of Selectmen liaison).

Proponents: Andrea Vient and John Vient – Assabet Properties  
Scott Hayes – Foresite Engineering

Also present: Terra Friedrichs, Michaela Moran

Documents Reviewed: Updated Proposed Plot Plan, dated July 11, 2016 by Foresite Engineering; Front, Rear and Side Elevation & Floor Plans (4 pages, undated) by Concord Lumber Corporation (Jane Grover, Architect); neighborhood photographs.

The DRB reviewed prior drawings on June 1, 2016. In this follow-up meeting, the DRB commended the applicants for responding to the concerns expressed by the DRB during its initial review. The DRB deemed the revised plans considerably improved, including the decision to merge the two units into an intentionally combined duplex scaled and positioned on the site in a manner that is very sympathetic to the neighboring residential structures. The DRB thanked the applicants for their efforts.

The existing site is comprised of two lots and two small existing single family homes that are very close to the street (<20'). The site has a gentle upward slope from east to west (front to back) with the slope becoming steeper as you go towards the western property line (rear) of the site. The site is in the Village Residential Zone.

The proposed project involves razing the homes and constructing a single duplex building set back approximately 11' from the front property line. Both units are proposed to be approximately 2300 square feet. The entrance to the unit on the left (from the perspective of one facing the front of the building) would have a covered farmer's porch. The entrance to the one on the right would be through an entrance portico. A separate four-car garage is proposed to be built behind the duplex. The septic system is proposed to be in the rear, partially under the paved driveway. The applicants added a 5' sidewalk. This project requires a Special Permit from the ZBA.

The DRB made several suggestions to the applicants, including sliding the left side duplex two feet further from the street towards the rear of the property to improve the visual separation of the two units and better distinguish each residential unit. The applicants acknowledged that this appears feasible. The DRB also recommended that the porch width be increased to allow for reasonable furniture placement.

The DRB also suggested that the garage include additional detailing, such as transom windows above the garage doors, and adding a window on each side wall of the garage building. Mr. Honn recommended that the applicants consider a recent project on Laws Brook Road (near the Acton town line), as it features an attractive, well-detailed garage.

Although the drawings suggested that wood siding would be utilized, the applicants indicated that they intended to use vinyl siding. The DRB encouraged the applicants to use wood to improve the aesthetic appeal and to ensure consistency with the majority of neighborhood residences. The applicant, although initially reluctant, implied they would comply with this material change. The DRB suggested that the vinyl could be used for the garage and composite posts on the porches also could be used and painted to look like wood. The DRB recommended that 5/4 wood be used on corners and generally on all of the front trim and window casings, which is a more historically correct material thickness.

The DRB requests that the ZBA impose the above design changes as conditions in the Special Permit.

The DRB requested the opportunity to view a more developed site plan, including a landscaping plan.

Respectfully submitted,

Michael R. Dube  
DRB Member